

COIR BOARD

REPORT
of the
AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR HUSK & FIBRE



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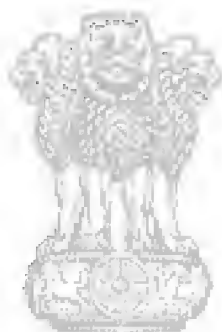
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सत्यमेव जयते

REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR HUSK & FIBRE INTRODUCTION

The Coir Board, at its meeting held on the 20th August, 1954, appointed an *Ad hoc* Committee for Husk and Fibre. The following members were nominated from the Board to the Committee :—

- (1) Shri N. Kunjuraman (Convener)
- (2) Shri K. V. Nanu
- (3) Shri V. K. Kumaran
- (4) Shri R. Janardanan Pillai
- (5) Shri S. C. Roy
- (6) Shri P. K. Dewar
- (7) Shri N. Narayana Kurup.

2. It was also decided that the Committee should include 4 other persons nominated from outside the membership of the Board. The following persons were accordingly appointed to the Committee :—

- (1) Shri B. M. Peter, Coir Merchant,
Mattancherry
- (2) Shri A. P. Raman, President, Malabar Coconut Grower's Association,
Valapad, S. Malabar
- (3) Shri Kochu Pillai, Neeravil, Husk Dealer &
Coir Merchant, Perinad
- (4) Shri V. K. Purushothaman, President,
Akhila Kerala Navika
Thozhilali Union, Kayamkulam.

3. The quorum for a meeting of the Committee was fixed at 5, of whom at least 3 should be members of the Board.

Scope of Enquiry

4. The Committee was directed to enquire into and advise the Coir Board on the policy to be adopted and the measures

necessary for carrying out the policy in respect of the following functions assigned to the Board under Section 10 of the Coir Industry Act:—

- (i) Regulating under the supervision of the Central Government the production of husk and coir fibre.
- (ii) Fixing grade standards and arranging when necessary for inspection of coir fibre.
- (iii) Promoting co-operative organisation among producers of husks and coir fibre.
- (iv) Ensuring remunerative returns to producers of husks and coir fibre.
- (v) Licensing of the retting places.

5. The Committee met on the following dates:—

- (1) 21st August, 1954
- (2) 13th September, 1954
- (3) 10th December, 1954
- (4) 30th December, 1954
- (5) 27th February, 1955
- (6) 14th March, 1955
- (7) 7th May, 1955
- (8) 21st June, 1955
- (9) 12th August, 1955.

At the meeting held on 21st August, 1954, the scope of enquiry for the Committee was discussed and it was decided that it should include:—

- (a) Collection of statistical data regarding total production of coconut husk in India and the percentage of husk used for retting and extraction of fibre; the various uses to which husk is put in different States; investigation of the different methods of retting in different places, etc.
- (b) Formulating proposals for improved methods of retting and artificial methods of retting where natural facilities are not available.

- (c) Consideration of licensing of retting places.
- (d) Investigation of the different kinds of fibre produced, grading such fibres, and to define minimum standards for them.
- (e) Examination of the scope and advantage of co-operative organisation among husk retters and producers of fibre, and appraisal of the results so far achieved by the coir co-operative scheme working in Travancore-Cochin State.
- (f) Formulating proposals for remunerative return to husk retters and producers of fibre and examination of the desirability of introducing minimum wages in the industry.

6. For the above purpose a questionnaire was drawn up (Appendix I). The questionnaire was distributed to 228 individuals, bodies, Chambers of Commerce, Associations, Co-operative Institutions, etc. Replies were received from 33 parties only. A list of those from whom replies were received is attached (Appendix II). Out of the 33 answers received, 12 were from Co-operative Societies in Travancore-Cochin State, 2 from Chambers of Commerce, 4 from Associations of Coir Merchants, 3 from Firms and Companies, 1 from a Union, 5 from individuals and 6 from Government Departments. No institution or individual from States other than Travancore-Cochin, Madras, West Bengal and Mysore, had replied to the questionnaire. So far as Travancore-Cochin State is concerned information received is considered adequate for the purpose of enquiry. Information received in respect of other States where coir is produced or where there are possibilities of coir production, viz., Madras, West Bengal, Andhra Mysore, Bombay and Orissa, is very meagre. The Committee considers that further details should be collected in regard to these States.

Availability of Husks

7. Coconut husk is the raw material of the Coir Industry. It is available in sizeable quantities in places where there is large scale coconut cultivation. According to statistical reports available for 1952-53, there are seven States in India, each with

an area under coconut cultivation of not less than 10,000 acres. Travancore-Cochin State leads with an area of 6,67,739 acres under cultivation followed by Madras including Andhra with an area of 6,38,580 acres, Mysore 1,74,267 acres, Bombay 31,567 acres, West Bengal 36,500 acres and Orissa 10,955 acres in order of ranking. The total area in India under coconut cultivation is estimated to be over 15 lakhs of acres producing about 330 crores of coconuts annually. A statement showing the area under coconut cultivation and the production of coconuts in India during the years 1948-49 to 1952-53 compiled by the Indian Central Coconut Committee is given as Appendix III. World production of coconuts is reported to be about 1,407 crores spread over an area of 84 lakhs of acres; India ranks second in coconut production, the first place being claimed by Philippines, if reckoned on a world basis.

1. Only a portion of the husk available in India is at present used for extraction of fibre according to the report on the marketing of coconuts and coconut products in India issued in 1944 by the Central Agricultural Marketing Department of the Government of India. It was estimated that only 43 per cent of the husks in India were utilised for extraction of fibre. The yield of fibre from husk varies depending on the method used for separating the fibre, the season and the quality of husk utilised and fibre produced. Allowing for these variations it has been estimated in the above report that husks from thousand coconuts yield about 180 lbs. of fibre. The total yield of fibre from 1,265 million coconuts estimated to be utilised for extraction of fibre works out approximately to 102,000 tons.

9. No statistics are available regarding the production of fibre or of yarn in the Travancore-Cochin State or in other States. Being a cottage industry spread over a wide area, production figures are difficult to obtain. No attempt has also been made to take a census of production. The Panel on Coir Rope, Cordage and Other Fibre Industries, appointed by the Government of India, has estimated the production of coir, manufactured and unmanufactured, in India in 1947 to be

122,326 tons. The Minimum Wages Committee for the manufacture of coir, appointed by the Travancore-Cochin Government in 1952, has estimated production of coir yarn in the Travancore-Cochin State at 865.5 candies per day, which would amount to an annual production of about 95,000 tons. The *Ad hoc* Committee for Internal Marketing appointed by the Board has estimated the production of coir yarn, based on the average annual exports to places outside India, shipments to places in India, despatches by rail and consumption in the producing centres (Travancore-Cochin and Malabar) at 120,000 tons, and allowing for a wastage of 10 per cent in the spinning and manufacturing processes, they have estimated the annual production of fibre in India at 130,000 tons. In the absence of other reliable statistics, this Committee considers that the estimate made by the *Ad hoc* Committee for Internal Marketing regarding the annual production of coir fibre in India can be accepted as a fair and reasonable basis. For considering measures for developing the industry, it is essential to have such statistics relating to the above. The statistical section of the Coir Board should take up the matter.

10. The replies received to the questionnaire show that the extraction of fibre and production of coir are carried out on an extensive scale only in the Travancore-Cochin State and some districts of Malabar in the Madras State. The main reason for the non-utilisation of husks for fibre production in other coconut producing areas is that natural retting facilities are not available in these places. At present husks are put to industrial use on a large scale only in Travancore-Cochin State and Malabar. In West Bengal, it is reported that about 11,000 Cwts of fibre are produced annually. This is either sold as fibre or is converted into coir yarn of low quality. In Andhra, soaking is done in big pots for 24 hours and the husks are then taken out and fibre extracted. This fibre is used for making brushes, upholstery, etc., (Figures are not available.) From Mysore and Orissa no information has been received. It is likely that the husks available in these States are mostly used as fuel or for other purposes.

Retting Facilities

11. As observed above, natural retting facilities are available only in Travancore-Cochin State and Malabar. By retting is meant the steeping of raw husk in brackish water in lagoons (which are so common in Travancore-Cochin State and Malabar) for a period extending from 6 to 8 or in some cases even 10 months. After retting, husks are taken out and fibre extracted. The fibre so extracted usually possesses a golden colour, is comparatively soft and has good tensile strength. This fibre is used for making superior kinds of coir yarn. There is another variety of fibre which is extracted from soaked husks. Such fibre has a reddish tinge, is more coarse and less pliable and is used for making lower strands of coir yarn. Soaked husk is husk steeped in water from a few days to a few weeks. This method is in vogue in some parts of Travancore-Cochin State, South Kanara and Bengal. In some parts of Kanara, Malabar and Travancore-Cochin State, raw husk is also used for extraction of fibre. About retting facilities in other States, no information has been received by the Committee. It would be desirable to make further enquiries by visiting centres of coconut production in these States.

Extraction of Fibre

12. Fibre is ordinarily extracted by beating retted husk with wooden mallets. Extraction of fibre with the help of machine is not common. The answers to the questionnaire however mention a few machines that can be used for crushing husks and extraction of fibre. Some of them are known as the Nanji process, Hages Gratez process, Elod Thomas process, Vander Jart process, etc. In all these processes the raw husk is crushed with the help of machine and the crushed husk is treated with some chemical and the fibre is drawn out. Such machines are not known to be in use anywhere in India and detailed information of their working is not available. However, at Cherai in Travancore-Cochin State, recently two or three mechanical contrivances for extraction of fibre from retted husks are being worked. It is admitted on all hands that if the use of machine is adopted there will be displacement of labour.

The Committee therefore in view of the present conditions of under-employment of labour employed in the industry, do not advocate the introduction of machine for extracting fibre from retted husk. But, where there are no natural facilities for retting, extraction of fibre with the help of machine may be resorted to. Artificial methods of retting where there are no natural facilities may form the subject matter of study and research by the Coir Board. In Ceylon, for making brush fibre, machine extraction is resorted to. A good quantity of brush fibre is imported into Bombay from Ceylon. This would become unnecessary if the husk now used for purposes other than retting is exploited for making fibre. Several of the answers would stress the fact that India is in a position to supply and cater to the entire need of the world in coir fibre.

13. It has already been stated that in Travancore-Cochin State and Malabar, there are lagoons and backwaters that provide ideal retting places for husk. In the course of answers to the questionnaire the problem of letting out Government poromboke lands suitable for retting has been raised by a considerable section. From Malabar the complaint has been voiced that Government are charging high rent for poromboke lands. In the interest of the industry, the Committee would recommend that as far as possible Government poromboke lands suitable for retting should be let out at cheap rent. The Committee would also recommend that retting of husk may be licensed. This would help collection of statistical data about the availability of retted husks. The majority of the answers received in that behalf are inclined that way. Licensing of retting places may be on the following scale :—

upto 25,000 husks	..	4 as.
above 25,000 upto 1 lakh	..	8 as.
above 1 lakh upto 5 lakhs	..	2 Rs.
above 5 lakhs	..	3 Rs.

By-products

14. What remains after the extraction of fibre is the pith and outer cover of the husk. It has been claimed that these by-products can be used for making card-boards, insulators,

etc. It would be useful to make investigations into the use of these by-products for industrial purposes. In a publication from the Legation of India, Manilla, Philippines, No. T. S. 40/53 dated 29th September, 1954, it is suggested that pith and short fibres of coconut husks can be used for the manufacture of building construction materials. This would serve as a useful guide for research in that direction. It is also claimed that the pith and juice have got a manurial value.

Co-operative Organisation among Producers of Husks & Fibre

15. While dealing with the subject of co-operative organisation among producers of husks and fibre, the Committee is constrained to observe that it is not in a position to speak about the conditions that obtain in places other than Travancore-Cochin State. Exhaustive answers have been received in that behalf from Coir Co-operative Institutions in Travancore-Cochin State; but no informative answers have come from any other State though some of the answers received from the latter would suggest that co-operative organisation is desirable and necessary. In Travancore-Cochin State, raw husk is collected at the source, i. e., from where they are dehusked or peeled from the coconut. The husk so collected is transported in *valloms* or country-crafts or other vehicles of transport to retting places where they are retted in lots of hundreds or thousands as is suitable or expedient. There are numerous landholders in Travancore-Cochin State each owning from a few cents to a few acres of coconut plantations, the former being by far the larger in number. The collection of husk from the different owners at the source is therefore in itself a laborious process. To collect husks from the hinterland is often difficult and expensive. This work is done by raw husk dealers who employ a good number of agents in the countryside to do the collection work. The husk so collected is sold to those who are called retted husk dealers. Both the raw husk dealer and the retted husk dealer are two distinct entities or factors in the industry. Then there is the third factor, viz, the primary producer of fibre or coir yarn. Unlike the former (husk dealers) the latter has little command of capital or access

to credit facilities. They are very large in number spread over the entire length of the State. The problem of the coir industry is indeed the problem of the tens of thousands of petty primary producers and lakhs of labourers who assist the primary producers in the manufacture of fibre and yarn. While it is being generally felt that the dealer in husk is able to look after himself, the condition of the primary producer and the labour deserves sympathy and demands amelioration. The latter is, as it were, hemmed in between the husk dealer at the bottom and the exporter of fibre and yarn at the top who are in a position to dictate terms. The result is that the chances of remunerative return are generally denied to this hard pressed section who really are the bulwark of the industry. The Committee is therefore of the opinion that with a view to ensuring remunerative returns to the largest section of the industry, viz., the primary producer and the labour, co-operative organisation and enterprise should be promoted and encouraged among them with liberal grants for such organisation and substantial credit facilities to provide working capital for such enterprise. The Committee feels that this is a rich field for the promotion of industrial co-operative effort well worth trying and calculated to yield good results.

16. The Committee had occasion to go through the administration report on the working of the coir co-operative scheme launched by the Travancore-Cochin State Government and the comments made in the course of answers to the questionnaire about the scheme. The Committee understands the Travancore-Cochin State Coir Co-operative Scheme is one envisaged under the First Five Year Plan. There is only about an year more for the First Five Year Plan period to expire. Out of a total of 64 lakhs of rupees earmarked to be spent under the scheme for its working (grant and loan), the Committee is given to understand that only about 20 lakhs of rupees have been spent so far. The success of the scheme depends mainly on the availability of capital to the societies to purchase and stock the raw material so as to enable them to distribute this at reasonable rates, for production of fibre and yarn. This would serve as a corrective against the monopolistic activities

of the individual husk dealers who hoard as much raw material as possible to sell out at exorbitant rates. The Committee would therefore urge the quickening of the tempo of financial assistance to societies to keep in step with objective target under the Five year Plan. Almost all the answers are inclined on the side of co-operative enterprise among producers of husk, fibre and yarn. The answers supplied by the coir co-operative societies would suggest that it would have been possible to show better results had they been provided with the necessary working capital by Government in time. The Committee is strongly of the view that large and more conscious encouragement should be given to the working of the coir co-operative scheme so that it would be in a position ere long to embrace and bring within its fold the entire fibre producing and coir spinning section of the industry (fibre producing and spinning of coir yarn are so inter-related that it cannot be considered anything other than one integrated picture). The Committee would, however, on an appraisal of the scheme, make use of this opportunity to request the Travancore-Cochin State Government to enquire into the working of the Coir Co-operatives and adopt suitable changes to yield better results. The Committee would further urge the introduction of the co-operative system for the development of the coir industry in other States also.

Coir Minimum Wages and its Reactions

17. In this context the Committee feels that it would not be out of place to refer to the coir minimum wages introduced in Travancore-Cochin State. Minimum wage rates were introduced without proper notice to the various interests representing the industry and as such initial upsets and uncertainties followed such a step. But the Committee is glad to note with relief that the initial upsets have subsided and stability has been practically restored. Minimum wages have ushered in a new phase in the industry in that with its implementation the price of husk in future will be linked to the price of coir yarn or coir fibre on a more stable and reasonable basis. For successful implementation of the coir minimum wages, the Committee

would argue that it has now become all the more necessary that the co-operatives should function more effectively and with greater vigour. The supply of raw material, i. e., raw and retted husk at reasonable rates all round the year through co-operative societies and the marketing of fibre and yarn to fetch the best price in the market through the medium of the central marketing co-operative societies are the chief object of the Coir Co-operative Scheme. This only would ensure a remunerative return to the rank and file of primary producers by conserving all the gains in the hands of the societies so as to make them available for equitable distribution to all concerned.

Price Control of Husk

18. The introduction of the minimum wages and its enforcement has brought to the fore a very relevant point for consideration relating to the fixation of prices (price control) for husk. A section would advocate in their answers to the questionnaire some kind of price control for husk in the wake of Minimum Wages. The Committee after an elaborate discussion on the subject has arrived at the view that price control—let alone its legal difficulties—does not seem to be feasible at this stage. Once Minimum Wages are fixed the price of husk will and must become automatically controlled in some measure bearing a constant ratio to the price of coir yarn. When the price of coir yarn or fibre fluctuates, the price of husk should also fluctuate at a constant ratio unlike in previous days when fluctuation in price of yarn meant the cutting down of the wages of labour to bolster up the price of husk. The fixation of Minimum Wages has helped to introduce an element of stability in the price structure of husk. With coir co-operative societies effectively functioning and stepping in for the purchase of raw husk for the purpose of retting and supplying to the primary producers, the introduction of the Minimum Wages would tend to exercise a sort of healthy automatic control over the price of raw husk which would render any legal control unnecessary.

Relationship between the Price of Husk, Fibre and Yarn

19. A few of the answers would seem to maintain the position that past experience went to show that there subsisted

between the price of husk, fibre and yarn, a steady and reasonable relationship. The Committee is inclined to concur with the view expressed in the majority of answers that such a relationship has never been in existence. In fact the difficulty of getting husk at reasonable prices for the producers of fibre and yarn due to the reluctance of monopolist husk dealers to part with the husk in their hands at reasonable price commensurate with the change in price of yarn and fibre has been the bane of this industry on the spinning side. The Committee would therefore reiterate their views that only the steady implementation of the co-operative machinery would solve this difficulty which was being experienced in the past several years

Competition from other Fibres

20. There are a number of substitutes for coir fibre such as Manila hemp, Sisal, etc. In the world market, according to some reports, coir exports constitute but one-fifth of the total consumption of hard fibre. Exports from Ceylon in 1954 of coir bristle and mattress fibre amounted to 68,800 tons (15,000 tons of bristles and 53,800 tons of mattress fibre), and of coir yarn, to 2,620 tons. It is hoped that Ceylon competition would not constitute any immediate threat to Indian products inasmuch as Ceylon lacks the natural facilities for retting of husks and the advantages consequent on that. In this connection, it would be useful to quote the authority of Dr. S. C. Barker, formerly employed in the War Department Research Section for coir yarn. He says coir has got certain qualities of its own. It is more fitted for rough use and can stand wear and tear. It is damp proof and insect proof. Other fibres have their own special qualities, and for a variety of purposes, though not for all, would be preferred by the foreign consumers but for the fact that their prices are usually higher than that of coir and products of coir. Knowledgeable circles are of the view that coir has successfully survived the post-war fluctuations in price and demand and that numerous substitutes like jute, Chinese and Japanese seaweeds and grass floor coverings, Manila hemp, Javan sisal, South African sisal, Abaca, Linon henequin, and synthetic fibre have played but an insignificant

part. It is not the purpose of this Committee to go into details as this pertains to the scope of enquiry of the Marketing Committees constituted by the Board. Those Committees would be making detailed study and submitting their valuable suggestions.

Export of Fibre

21. Practically the entire fibre produced in this country is utilised internally. Statistical data available from 1946-47 to 1953-54 would show that export of fibre was to the extent of only 12,500 Cwts. on an average annually. In the opinion of the Committee, this need not create undue anxiety.

Standardisation and Grading of Fibre

22. The general view that could be gathered from the answers is that it is desirable to fix grade standards. But this work should be left to the Indian Standards Institution.

Collection of Statistical Data

23. The absence of correct data to base conclusions has been a serious handicap throughout. This difficulty was most keenly felt in the nature of the work undertaken by this Committee. We have adopted the data supplied by the Indian Central Coconut Committee regarding the production of coconuts. But then the difficulty of estimating how far the husk was being exploited for the purpose of extraction of fibre and to what other uses it is put, confronted the Committee in all seriousness, in the absence of any statistical data worth the name. The scanty information that filtered through the answers to the questionnaire was too meagre for drawing conclusions in this respect. While therefore the Committee could formulate specific recommendations on certain points ascertained from authentic and clear data, the Committee is diffident to express their views one way or other on other matters for want of sufficient material to act upon. In the circumstances, the Committee feels it necessary that this report should be supplemented and made fuller by further recommendations on the basis of facts ascertained as a result of on-the-spot enquiries in coconut producing areas in States like Mysore, Bengal, Bombay, Andhra and Orissa.

24. The Committee wishes to place on record its high appreciation of the services rendered by Shri N. Kunjuraman, its Convener, and also its thanks to the Chairman and staff of the Board who rendered all assistance in the preparation of this report.

Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations

(1) Reliable information regarding the extent of husk used for extracting fibre in India and other uses to which husk is put is not available. For considering measures for developing the coir industry, it is essential to have such statistics relating to the above. The statistical section of the Coir Board should take up this matter.

(2) The effect of different methods of retting husk on fibre and the devising of artificial method of retting, where there are no natural retting facilities, may form the subject matter of study and research by the Coir Board (Research Section).

(3) The Committee do not recommend at this stage the introduction of machinery for extraction of fibre as this would tend to make more acute the unemployment position of labour engaged in the industry. But it would recommend the use of machinery in places where extraction of fibre is done from raw husk and artificial retting devices would be employed.

(4) The Committee would recommend the issue of licences for retting on a sliding scale. It is recommended further that the various Governments should be approached by the Board to let out for retting Government poromboke lands suitable for the purpose, at nominal rates.

(5) The pith and outer cover of the husk can be used for making cardboards and insulators. It can also be used for making building construction materials. Investigation may be made into the various uses to which the pith and the outer cover can be put. This may be done by the Research Section.

(6) Co-operative organisation among producers of husk and fibre must be started and encouraged in all States. In the opinion of the Committee, the working of the existing coir co-operatives of Travancore-Cochin State must be enquired

into and strengthened and quickened with necessary modifications.

(7) Minimum Wages in Coir Industry must be enforced to ensure a fair deal to the labour employed therein. Minimum Wages have come to stay in Travancore-Cochin State and it is producing salutary effects in that it tends to stabilise the price of husk and link it on a more stable and reasonable basis with the price of fibre and yarn. Minimum Wages should be introduced in the other States.

(8) The Committee is of the view that price control — let alone its legal difficulties — does not seem to be feasible at this stage. The co-operative machinery and minimum wages would help to establish a reasonable relationship between the price of yarn, fibre and husk.

(9) Experience does not warrant any serious threat to the industry from other fibres; nor does Ceylon competition in the field of coir fibre offer any immediate threat.

(10) Export of fibre is negligible and practically the entire fibre produced in India is utilised internally. The Committee does not at this stage consider it necessary to recommend any measure to restrict export of fibre.

(11) Fixing grade standards of fibre may be left to the Indian Standards Institution.

(12) The Committee feels it necessary that this report should be supplemented and made fuller by further recommendations on the basis of facts ascertained as a result of on-the-spot enquiries in coconut producing areas in States like Mysore, Bengal, Bombay-Andhra and Orissa.

Sd/- K. Narayana Menon (Chairman)

Sd/- B. M. Peter

Sd/- P. K. Dewar

Sd/- V. K. Kumaran

Sd/- V. K. Purushothaman

Sd/- Kochu Pillai

Sd/- R. Janardanan Pillai

Sd/- K. V. Nanoo

Sd/- N. Kunjuran (Vice-Chairman & Convener)

APPENDIX I

AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR HUSK AND FIBRE QUESTIONNAIRE

[Answers to all the questions or to questions relating to any of the subjects in which you are interested may kindly be sent to Shri P. K. Dewar, Ernakulam, on or before 1st December, 1954]

1. What are the common methods of extraction of coconut fibre? Are machines for "bursting" raw husk commonly in use in India? If they are not, can they be used with advantage where facilities for retting do not exist? What will be the cost of a machine for "bursting" raw husk? What do you think about its efficiency? How does fibre drawn from retted husk compare with that drawn from raw husk, for the purpose of making yarn? Cannot fibre extracted by machine be used for mattresses and brushes?

2. What are the different purposes for which husk and fibre are being used in different parts of India? Are not mattress fibre and brush fibre being imported into India from Ceylon at present? Are these being made in any part of India now? If so, where and what will be the estimated annual production? Do you think that enough fibre can be produced in India to meet our demand and for export? Can we compete with Ceylon in this respect? If not, why?

3. What are the by-products of the extraction of fibre from raw husk? Are these by-products of any commercial value?

4. Is it possible to extract fibre from soaked husk, instead of retted husk? Is this method being followed in any part of India or in any other place? If so, where? What are the advantages of this method? What will be the price of the machinery used for this purpose?

5. Do you think that physical exertion can be greatly reduced without creating unemployment and production of

fibre increased, if some simple machinery can be used for beating retted husk ?

6. Is the supply of retted husk enough to meet our demands? What method will you suggest for ascertaining the approximate annual production of yarn in the important producing centres? Will you recommend a system of licensing of retting places? What will be the object of licensing? Is it intended to help collection of statistics of production or to ensure fair distribution of retted husk?

7. Are retting places being licensed in any part of India? What is the purpose served? What is the agency which issues licences? Are the licence fees fair and reasonable?

8. What is the rent usually charged for private retting places? What is the rent charged by Government for porambokes used as retting grounds? Is the rent charged for poramboke lands used as retting grounds in the Madras State fair and reasonable?

9. Should any grades be fixed for fibre? Should this not be done by the Indian Standards Institution?

10. Are spinners of yarn finding it too difficult to get retted husk and fibre at reasonable rates? Will co-operative organisations of spinners help them to buy and stock husk for retting?

11. How far have co-operative organisations proved useful for the development of the coir industry? What is the progress made by the Travancore-Cochin Government's scheme for co-operative organisation of husk-retters and spinners?

12. Should the price of raw husk be controlled? How can the control be enforced?

13. Can we introduce a system of licensing of dealers in raw husk? Will this be practicable where there are a large number of small coconut gardens scattered all over the country, and where husk is used largely as fuel?

14. Considering the movement of prices during the past years, how far has equilibrium been maintained between the prices of husk, fibre, yarn, and manufactured products?

Convener,

AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR HUSK & FIBRE

APPENDIX II

LIST OF THOSE WHO SENT ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

1. The Secretary, Thrikkadavoor Coir Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3084, Perinad.
2. The Gnarakal Coir Vyavasaya Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 833, Nayarambalam.
3. The Secretary, Monkompur Coir Vyavasaya Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 20, Monkompur.
4. The Secretary, Cochin Central Co-operative Coir Marketing Society Ltd., No. 428, Mattancheri.
5. The Secretary, Mannanchery Coir Vyavasaya Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3092, Mannanchery.
6. The President, Paravur Coir Vyavasaya Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3088, Paravur.
7. The Secretary, Paravur Coir Vyavasaya Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3088, Paravur.
8. The Secretary, Kappil Coir Vyavasaya Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3085, Kappil.
9. The Secretary, Vadakkekara Coir Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3068, Vadakkekara.
10. The Kadakavur Coir Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3055, Kadakavur.
11. The Secretary, Karupadanna-Vallivattum Coir Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 822, Vallivattum.
12. The Secretary, Thiruvallom - Pachalloor Coir Vyavasaya Co-operative Society Ltd., No. 3061, Thiruvallom P. O., Trivandrum-8.
13. The Secretary, Kanara Chamber of Commerce, Mangalore-1.
14. The Hony. Secretary, Malabar Chamber of Commerce, Calicut.
15. The Secretary, Coconut Husk Dealers' Association, Kayamkulam.

16. The Secretary, Travancore-Cochin Coir Producer's & Dealers' Association, Alleppey.
 17. The Hony. Secretary, Travancore-Cochin Coir Yarn Merchants' Association, Alleppey.
 18. The Hony. Secretary, Cochin Coir Merchants' Association, Cochin.
 19. Messrs. Peirce Leslie & Co., Ltd., Cochin-1.
 20. Messrs. Volkart Brothers, Cochin.
 21. Shri K. Kesavan Nayar, C/o Messrs. Peirce Leslie & Co., Ltd., Calicut.
 22. The Manager, Associated Cottage Industries & Shippers Union, Shertallay.
 23. Shri P. P. Thomas, B. A., Inspector for the Development of the Coir Industry, Alwaye.
 24. Shri S. C. Roy, Member, Coir Board, P. O. Baniben, Ulubaria, Dist. Howrah (W. Bengal).
 25. Shri C. R. Jam, C/o Bangaru Checka & Co., Post Box No 2, Kakinada.
 26. Shri K. P. Amrithanatha Iyer, Member, Coir Board, Monkompur.
 27. Shri C. E. Menon, Parappanangadi
 28. Shri C. G. Panicker, Senior Instructor, Government Coir Industrial School, Baruva.
 29. The Joint Registrar for Industrial Co-operatives and Village Industries, Poona.
 30. The Supervisor, 1st Coir Weaving Demonstration Party, West Bengal.
 31. Notes on Travancore-Cochin Coir Co-operative Scheme by Coir Special Officer.
 32. The Assistant Secretary to Government, Development Department, Government of Bombay, Bombay.
 33. The Superintendent, Government Coir School, Beypore.
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APPENDIX III

Area under and Production of Coconuts in India during Five Years ending 1952-53

	Area in acres					Production of coconuts in thousands				
	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53	1948-49	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52	1952-53
Travancore-Cochin ...	660402	663779	661442	667379	667739	1320804	1327558	1322884	1334758	1335478
Madras ...	629672	633043	637314	648030	638580	1568600	1573076	1575749	1604020	1565490
Mysore ...	181607	182459	185715	172958	174267	290574	291932	297148	312879	273961
Bombay ...	30189	30636	31535	31567	31567	45284	45954	47303	47351	47351
West Bengal ...	16500	16500	16500	16500	16500	22205	22205	22205	22205	22205
Orissa ...	10972	10972	11019	10923	10955	31848	31848	34363	34155	33669
Assam ...	3573	3573	3573	3573	3573	21912	21912	21912	21912	21912
Others ...	1000	1000	1000	1000	1000	2000	2000	2000	2000	2000
Total	1533915	1541962	1548098	1551930	1544181	3303227	3316485	3323564	3379282	3301066

Figures for 1952-53 are only provisional and those for subsequent years are not yet available.

APPENDIX IV

Export of Coir Fibre to places outside India and shipments
to places in India from the Malabar Coast Ports

Years (July to June)	Export (Cwts.)	Shipments to places in India (Cwts.)	Total (Cwts.)
1941—42	29918	..	29918
1942—43	360	..	360
1943—44	3560	..	3560
1944—45	8660	50	8710
1945—46	7349	..	7349
1946—47	11600	..	11600
1947—48	8464	..	8464
1948—49	5427	1900	7327
1949—50	6283	1130	7413
1950—51	20229	1620	21849
1951—52	12016	2360	14376
1952—53	14846	300	15146
1953—54	13487	160	13647

Source.- Annual Reports of the Cochin Chamber of Commerce.
Shipments to Pakistan are included in shipments to places
in India

Decisions of the Coir Board on the Recommendations of the Ad hoc Committee for Husk & Fibre

1. The statistical section of the Coir Board should take up the question of collecting reliable information regarding the extent of husk used for extracting fibre in India and other uses to which husk is put.

2. The effect of different methods of retting husk on fibre and the devising of artificial method of retting, where there are no natural retting facilities, should form the subject matter of study and research by the Coir Board (Research Section). The Research Section should also investigate into the various uses to which the pith and outer cover can be put, such as making cardboards, insulators and building construction materials

3. Machinery for extraction of fibre should not be introduced at this stage, as this would tend to make more acute the unemployment position of labour engaged in the industry. However, machinery can be used in places where extraction of fibre is done from raw husk and artificial retting devices would be employed.

4. The Coir Board should issue the licences for retting free for the time being.

5. The Board should approach the various Governments to let out for retting Government poromboke lands suitable for the purpose, at nominal rates.

6. Co-operative organisation among producers of husk and fibre must be started and encouraged in all States. The working of the existing coir co-operatives of Travancore-Cochin State must be enquired into and strengthened and quickened with necessary modifications.

7. Minimum Wages in the Coir Industry must be enforced to ensure a fair deal to the labour employed therein. As in Travancore-Cochin State, Minimum Wages should be introduced in other States also.

8. Price control on husk—let alone its legal difficulties—does not seem to be feasible at this stage. The co-operative machinery and Minimum Wages would help to establish a

reasonable relationship between the price of yarn, fibre and husk.

9. It is not necessary at this stage to take any measure to restrict export of fibre.

10. Fixing grade standards of fibre should be left to the Indian Standards Institution.

11. It is necessary that this report should be supplemented and made fuller by further recommendations on the basis of facts ascertained as a result of further enquiries in coconut producing areas in States like Mysore, Bengal, Bombay, Andhra and Orissa.

